
Wisconsin Forestry Notes

April 2006

Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

In an attempt to halt the destructive emerald ash borer at Wisconsin's borders, an emergency rule prohibits out-of-state firewood in state-owned campgrounds this year.

Rule proposed to halt pest at Wisconsin borders

Leave your firewood at home. This is the message of an emergency rule recently approved by the state Natural Resources Board to address the growing threat of the emerald ash borer (EAB) and other harmful forest pests and diseases. Since the EAB is moving around on firewood, the rule prohibits people visiting Wisconsin state parks, forests, and other DNR-managed properties where campfires are permitted from bringing out-of-state firewood onto those properties during 2006. The rule will mostly affect out-of-state campers, but could also affect Wisconsin campers who purchase or chop their own wood in other states. Wisconsin stands to lose a lot if EAB arrives in the state and goes unchecked. Native ash trees number around 717 million in state forests and it's the second most common tree species in communities round the state, accounting for as much as a third of all urban trees. DNR will hold public hearings via live videoconference on the rule in Madison, Milwaukee, LaCrosse, Green Bay and Eau Claire on April 17 from 7 to 8 p.m. To find the locations or instructions for submitting written comments, visit the [Forestry Rules Webpage](#). Visit dnr.wi.gov/invasives for more information, or contact Andrea Diss-Torrance at 608-264-9247.

A Wisconsin partnership leads the nation in an innovative effort to promote and assist in the recovery of the Karner blue butterfly, a federally endangered species.

The Wisconsin Karner Blue HCP Turns a Corner

The Wisconsin Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) – a partnership led by the DNR to conserve and sustainably manage land with consideration for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly – is taking a new direction. At their annual winter meeting last month, the HCP Partnership chose to move even more in the direction of voluntary conservation in contrast to conventional regulatory compliance programs, which overshadows most other endangered species protection efforts. The program's diverse group of thirty-nine partners includes entities such as industrial forestry companies, county forests, county highway departments, conservation organizations and three state agencies including the DNR.

DNR's incidental take permit expires in 2009, and, while the butterfly is present in Wisconsin in prodigious numbers, it is not doing as well in the eastern part of its national range. With this in mind, the Wisconsin partnership resolved to change its focus from strictly monitoring and reporting on the numbers and presence of Karner blues to promoting and assisting in the recovery of the species. To make this feasible, scarce resources will need to be shifted from costly, and oftentimes onerous, regulatory compliance activities which do not provide significant conservation value. Many HCP processes will be redesigned and streamlined. The partnership hopes to aid in the down listing and eventual delisting of the species from the federal Endangered Species list in an innovative and cost-effective manner that will further serve as a model for other federally endangered species programs. To learn more about this effort since the HCP was approved in September 1999, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/karner/> or contact [David Lentz](#) in the Division of Forestry at 608-261-6451.

The Lake Camelot Property Owner's Association is posed to join the Crystal Lake Club in the Firewise program as they invest in lowering their wildfire ignition potential.

Second community prepares to enter Firewise program

The May 5, 2005 wildfire that burned 3,410 acres in Adams county has prompted a nearby community to lower their wildfire vulnerability. Working with DNR Forestry staff and the Town of Rome Fire Department, the Lake Camelot Property Owner's Association decided to enter into the Firewise Communities USA Recognition Program. Under this program, a community works together, with the guidance of local fire officials, to collectively lower their wildfire ignition potential.

Wisconsin's first Firewise Community is Crystal Lake Club in nearby Marquette and Waushara counties.

Last month DNR and the Town of Rome Fire Department personnel completed an assessment of Lake Camelot focused on issues of vegetation, access and building materials and their relation to wildfire potential, an important step towards earning Firewise recognition status. Residents are forming a Firewise Board that will be responsible for creating an action plan that describes the work they will accomplish, based on the findings in the assessment. Once the plan has been approved by local fire officials and residents have completed an activity, Lake Camelot will be eligible to be named Wisconsin's second Firewise Community. For more information, contact Wisconsin Firewise coordinator [Jolene Ackerman](mailto:Jolene.Ackerman@dnr.wi.gov) at 267-7677 or visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/Fire/prevention/firewise/index.htm>.

Wisconsin's peak fire season is here

Spring 2006 has the potential to be a very dangerous fire season. After last spring, which saw the most destructive wildland fire in Wisconsin in 25 years, precipitation levels remained well below average throughout the year. Though there has been some relief in recent weeks, long term moisture deficits continue. Short term weather events could keep this spring's fire season from developing into a bad one. But because of low soil moisture levels, any intermediate to long term dry spell has the potential to very quickly develop into severe fire weather. A dry spring could lead to fire occurrence and damage on a par with or worse than witnessed last year. In the past, severe fire seasons (1977, 1980, 1988) were preceded by below average soil moisture, setting the stage for dangerous fire weather. The stage is similarly set this year. For more information, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/Fire/> or contact [Blair Anderson](mailto:Blair.Anderson@dnr.wi.gov) at 608-264-6032. Smokey Bear says, "Please be careful!"

The current fire season has the potential to be very dangerous so state wildland fire officials urge everyone to exercise extreme caution to safely get through this dry period.

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